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From: Robert Mittelstaedt <ramittelstaedt1010@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 17, 2022 10:06 AM
To: Board Comment
Subject: Operations Comm. 2/18/22 meeting Agenda Item #2: Recreation Management Plan

Before spending over \$250,000 of ratepayer money on a recreation plan, please consider the following:

1. To the extent that the opposition to ebikes on fire roads triggered the idea of a recreation plan, there was a much easier, less expensive way for the Board to resolve the issue. It should have followed the recommendations of the 2020 Community Advisory Committee and allowed ebikes on the same fire roads that other bicycles are allowed to use. Or it should have accepted the later recommendations of its staff for a trial program of ebikes on fire roads. The Board's failure to do either has led to the current proposal to spend over \$250,000 for another consultant.
2. The premise of the proposal is that users are "overwhelming" the capacity of the watershed for recreation including "popular trails." I am up on Mt. Tam multiple times each week, and I've never seen anything close of the fire roads being "overwhelmed" by users. Mt. Tam remains one of the most peaceful places to recreate in the area. Hikers have 60 miles of trails for their exclusive use. And they share 90 miles of fire roads with cyclists and other users.
3. Before spending \$\$\$ on a study, I encourage Board members to spend more time on the fire roads and trails, and even try an ebike. This first-hand experience will dispel a lot of myths including that the fire roads or trails are anywhere close to capacity. In the process, if you identify any portions of any fire roads that you really think are "overwhelmed," you can focus your attention on those areas, at significantly less cost. At a minimum, you should ask the staff to identify those areas so that attention can be focused on them. In other words, what are "popular trails" that are "overwhelmed"? And what metric are they using?
4. A final suggestion: I am hopeful that Marin residents of good will on both sides of the ebike access issue could reach an amicable resolution if they understood that, absent resolution, the Board is intent on spending another quarter of a million dollars on consultants. The reality is that ebikes have been using Mt. Tam fire roads for years, and the GGNRA allows ebikes on almost all the same fire roads as other bicycles. If ebikes caused any material problems, there would be ample record of it by now.

If the Board asked representatives of MCL, MCBC, EbikeAccess and others to sit in a room, virtual or otherwise, and hammer out a resolution, I am hopeful that a resolution would be possible. At least it's worth a try. And if no resolution is forthcoming, the Board should simply say that the issue has been studied enough and the track record over the last several years shows that ebikes should be allowed to use the same fire roads as other bicycles. The Board can then move on to the more pressing issues facing it.